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# HERALD AND JOURNAL.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 1, 1845.

## MASSILLON AND HIS SERMONS.

We have heretofore briefly referred to the substantial volume of Massillon's Sermons, published by Waite, Peirce & Co. A later perusal of the work suggests to us some remarks on the character of the great Frenchman and his preaching. Massillon is, to our taste, the most interesting of the group of great pulpit orators who distinguished the age of Louis XIV. There is a profound sincerity, a stern and all convincing earnestness, a depth and energy in his character, which command not only the confidence, but the awe of the reader. He seems to preach as (in the sublime language of the apostle), "seeing him that is invisible." If heaven were opened above him, and the angels coming forth to the last judgment, and hell itself giving up its spirits for their final account, we could scarcely imagine him more profoundly earnest and terribly eloquent than he is at times in these discourses. It was indeed while describing such a scene himself, that his audience once rose up from their seats with exclamations of anguish. This one trait, earnestness, renders his eloquence at times absolutely appalling, and we grasp the book exclaiming, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" Yet there is no artifice of the rhetorician about him; no exaggerated pictures; no unique phrases; no startling appositions. No writer could be more exempt from them, notwithstanding his style is distinguished for classical purity and grace. He usually selects the most simple topics—"The Neglect of Religion"—"The Small Number of the Saved"—"The Duties accompanying Virtue"—"The Certainty of the Loss of the Righteous in a state of lukewarmness"—"The Delay of Conversion"—"The False Trust"—"The Day of Judgment," &c. Such are specimens; and not only the topics, but every page of their discussion shows that the inmost spirit of the man feels their terrible reality, and is stirred and aroused by them to a strength which is often majestic and overpowering. A slight and perspicuous texture of reasoning extends through his discourses, but it is only what may be necessary to step the mouth of the speculative gainsayer, and make the appeal to his conscience more resistless. He is too much in earnest to pause either for cunning metaphysics or meretricious ornament. His sword is one of iron, hilt and all, with no precious gems or ornament upon it, but yet with the temper of Damascus.

His style is thoroughly of the same character. It would be difficult to find a poetical ornament in his sermons. No individual phrase would be pronounced eloquent; but we may say almost literally that no paragraph could be read without attracting the attention by its serious force, yet individual paragraphs alone give no adequate idea of his eloquence. His force is cumulative. You pass from paragraph to paragraph, and page to page, through reasoning terms in simplicity and a phrasing of words, and at first with a growing consciousness that the subject is important, and that the preacher feels it deeply; next with a conviction that its interest is extraordinary; and a painful apprehension that you have never before appreciated it rightly; and end at last, overwhelmed with anxiety and awe, exclaiming, in the language of his sermon on the small number of the saved, "If this it is, who, O my God, will attain to salvation?"

In this particular of verbal style, Massillon contrasts favorably with most of the great French preachers. They are generally addicted to minute ornaments: he is celebrated for his graceful accuracy, but not for poetical embellishment; figures and phrases so important with them, he, in the intensity and earnestness of his purpose, cannot pause to admit. This is the true style of eloquence. Perhaps our greatest mistake in oratory is, that we confound eloquence with poetry. The imagination, and especially the fancy, belong to poetry; the passions chiefly to eloquence. They are not indeed exclusive; passion enters into poetry, but the picturesque and rhythm are its distinctive traits; imagination may aid eloquence, but in such cases it is like the flash of the cannon, momentary and not essential to the ball that carries home the effect. Cicero is ornate, but how sternly severe is Demosthenes, Pitt, Henry, Webster, and all the great orators celebrated not only for elegance but for effect? Eloquence is persuasion. Would you persuade your neighbor from stepping over a fatal precipice by florid language and picturesque thoughts? Men are always eloquent when they quarrel; but who ever quarrelled in poetical style? An Edinburgh writer says, in describing true eloquence, that "of all its characteristics, the most striking and the most universal, is the moderate use of the imagination." The pulpit has erred most sadly here. What vaporous nonsense, what bombast and imaginative hyperbole characterizes it, and even some of the most celebrated, or, at least, most notorious speakers? The critic remarked, to say that "the rapid declamation, the tawdry ornament, the too often are found in the pulpit, not only without astonishment, but with admiration, would not be tolerated a moment in the Senate or at the bar." The pulpit presents the noble sphere of eloquence, and demands its highest style. Its topics, and accompaniments, and objects, are all above the sport of juvenile declamation, or moon-stritten rhapsody. In no place, not even at the tribunal, where life and death pends on the doubtful hour, are meretricious trifles more out of place, are directness and trenchant earnestness more relevant.

Where we called upon to select a model of pulpit oratory, we might choose some other than Massillon, as comprehending a greater range of excellences, but none as exemplifying more fully the highest requisite of homiletic style, earnest and simple aim at its proposed result. We have already referred to the effect of one of his sermons. Voltaire said, in the *Encyclopedie*, that the passage mentioned was a chef d'œuvre, unsurpassed by anything in ancient or modern literature. The passage has often been given, but its power cannot be appreciated without reading the whole discourse. It is by no means his best; but its appalling energy makes it a good example of the preceding views. His object is to prove the danger of his hearers, by a consideration of the few that will be saved. He shows, in unflinching language, who alone can be saved, according to the scriptures and the authorities of the church in all ages. He is fearlessly rigorous here. He then proceeds with much detail to show that, according to the current sentiments and fashionable labors of Christendom, most men, most of his hearers, would be, must be lost. He was preaching to the nobility of France, in the most debauched period of her history, but he strikes home with terrible distinctness and power. Speaking as one who was to go from the pulpit to the bar of his God, he points to the gay saloon, to the theatre, the maxima of business life, and exclaims:

Permit me to ask you here, who confirm you in these ways? By what rule are they justified to your mind? Who authorizes you in this dissipation, which is neither agreeable to the title you have received by baptism, nor perhaps to those you hold from your ancestors? Who authorizes those public pleasures, which you only think innocent, because your soul, already too familiarized with sin, feels no longer the dangerous impressions or tendency of them? Who authorizes you to lead an effeminate and sensual life, without virtue, austerities, or any religious exercise?—to live like a stranger in the midst of your own family, disinclining to inform yourself with regard to the morals of those dependent upon you?—through an affected state, to be ignorant whether they believe in

the same God; whether they fulfil the duties of the religion you profess? Who authorizes you in making so little Christ? Is it the gospel of Jesus Christ? Is it the doctrine of the apostles and saints? For surely some rule is necessary to assure us that we are in safety. What is yours? Custom: that is the only reply you can make. We see none around us who do not conduct themselves in the same way, and by the same rule. Entering into the world, we find the manners already established: our fathers lived thus, and from them we copy our customs: the wisest conform to them: an individual cannot be wiser than the whole world, and must not pretend to make himself singular, by acting contrary to the general voice. Such, my brethren, are your only comforts against all the terrors of religion. None act up to the law. The public example is the only guaranty of our morals. We never reflect, that, as the Holy Spirit says, the laws of the people are vain: that our Savior has left us rules, in which neither times, ages, nor customs, can ever authorize the smallest change; that the heavens and the earth shall pass away; that customs and manners shall change; but that the divine laws will stand for ever.

We content ourselves with looking around us. We do not reflect that what, at present, we call custom, would, in former times, before the morals of Christians became degenerated, have been regarded as monstrous singularities; and, if corruption has gained since that period, these vices, though they have lost their singularity, have not lost their guilt. We do not reflect, that we shall be judged by the gospel, and not by custom; by the examples of the holy, and not by men's opinions;—that the habits, which are only established among believers by the relaxation of faith, are abuses we are to lament, not examples we are to follow;—that, in changing the manners, they have not changed our duties;—that the common and general example which authorizes them, only proves that virtue is rare, but that that profligacy is permitted;—in a word, that piety and a real Christian life are too unpalatable to our depraved nature ever to be practised by the majority of men. Come now, and say that you only do as others do. It is exactly by that you condemn yourselves. What! the most terrible certainty of your condemnation shall become the only motive for your confidence! Which, according to the Scriptures, is the road that conducts to death? Is it not that which the majority pursue? Which is the party of the reprobate? Is it not the multitude? You do nothing but what others do. But thus, in the time of Noah, perished all who were buried under the waters of the deluge; all who, in the time of Nebuchadnezzar prostrated themselves before the golden calf; all who, in the time of Elijah, bowed the knee to Baal; all who, in the time of Eleazar, abandoned the law of their fathers. You only do what others do, but that is exactly what the Scriptures forbid. Do not say, they conform themselves to the corrupted age. The corrupted age means not the small number of the just, whom you endeavor not to imitate; it means the multitude whom you follow. You only do what others do; you will consequently experience the same lot. Now, "Miserable to thee," (cried formerly St. Augustine), "fatal torrent of human customs; wilt thou never suspend thy course? To the end wilt thou drag in the children of Adam to this immense and terrible abyss?"

And what renders it still more dreadful is, that, acting in this manner, you only follow the torrent: your morals are the morals of almost all men. You may, perhaps, be acquainted with some still more guilty (for I suppose you have still remaining some sentiments of religion, and regard for your salvation); but do you know any real penitents? I am afraid we must search the deserts and solitudes for them. You can scarcely particularize, among persons of rank and usage of the world, a small number whose morals and mode of life, more austere and more guarded than the generality, attract the attention, and very like the censure of the public: all the rest walk in the same path. I see clearly that every one comforts himself by the example of his neighbor: that, in that point, children succeed to the false security of their fathers; that none live innocent; that none die penitent; I see, and I cry, O God! if thou hast not deceived us; if all thou hast said with regard to the road to eternal life, shall be fulfilled to the point; if the number of those who must perish shall not influence thee to abate from the severity of thy laws, what will become of that immense multitude which every hour disappears from the face of the earth? Where are our friends, our relations, who have gone before us, and what is their lot in the eternal regions of death? What shall we ourselves be one day? When formerly a prophet complained to the Lord, that all Israel had forsaken his protection, he replied, that seven thousand still remained who had not bowed the knee to Baal: behold the number of pure and faithful souls which a whole kingdom then contained? But couldst thou still, O my God! comfort the anguish of thy servants to-day by the same assurance? I know that thine eyes discern still some upright amongst us; that the priesthood has still its Phineases; the magistracy its Samuels; the sword its Josias; the court its Daniels, its Esthers, and its Davids; for the world only exists for thy chosen, and all would perish were the number accomplished. But those happy remains of the children of Israel who shall inherit salvation, what are they, compared to the grains of sand in the sea; to that number of sinners who combat for their own destruction? You come after this, my brethren, to inquire if it be true, that few shall be saved? Thou hast said it, O my God! and consequently it is a truth which shall endure for ever.

After such powerful exhortations, he thrusts the argument directly home in the terrible passage quoted by Voltaire, by supposing the judgment then bursting upon them. I limit myself to you here assembled: I speak no more of your men; I regard you only as you were on the earth: behold the thought which seizes and appals me! I imagine it the last hour: the universe has come to its end, the heavens open above your heads, Jesus Christ appears in his glory in the midst of this temple, and you are assembled to stand before him as trembling criminals, and hear him pronounce a sentence of peace, or a proclamation of eternal death; for it is in vain you flatter yourselves of the future. You will die such as you are to-day. All these desires of change, with which you amuse yourself, will continue to amuse you even to the bed of death; it is the experience of all ages. The only difference you have to expect, will most probably be a darker account than you would have to render to-day; and from what you may decide that it will be at last. Now I demand of you, I demand of you, I demand of you, if Jesus Christ were to appear in the midst of this temple to judge us, to make the terrible separation between the saved and the lost, do you believe that the greater number here would be placed on the right hand? Believe you that the number would, at least, be equal? Believe you that there would be found here even ten just men, when formerly five cities did not contain as many? I ask you—you know not; I know not. Then alone, O my God, knowest those that belong to thee. Now, who are the just and faithful assembled here at present? Titles and dignities avail nothing; you are stripped of all these in the presence of your judge. Who are they? Many sinners who wish not to be converted; many more who wish, but always put it off; many others, who are only converted in appearance, and again fall back to their former courses; in a word, a great number who flatter themselves they have no occasion for conversion. This is the party of the reprobate. Ah! my brethren, cut off from this assembly these four classes of sinners, for they will be cut off at the great day. And now appear, ye just: where are ye? O God! where are they yet? And what a portion remains to thy share!

My brethren, our ruin is almost certain; we will not try to escape it. If, in this fearful separation, which will one day certainly come, there should be one lost

soul in this assembly, and a voice from heaven should assure us of it, without particularizing him, who of us would not tremble lest he should be the devoted wretch? Who of us would not shudderingly inquire of his conscience, if his crimes did not deserve this punishment? Who of us, seized with dread, would not demand of Christ, as did the apostles, "Lord, is it I?" And should a short respite be granted to our prayer, who of us would not seek, by tears, supplications and sincere repentance, to avert the misfortune? Are we in our senses, my dear hearers? Perhaps, among all who listen to me, ten just would not be found; perhaps fewer. What do I know, O my God? I dare not with a fixed eye look into the abyss of thy judgments and justice. More than one, perhaps, would not be found amongst us all. And this danger affects you not, my dear hearer? You persuade yourself that in this great number who shall perish, you will be the happy individual; you, who have less reason, perhaps, than any other to believe it; you, upon whom alone the sentence of death should fall, were only one of all who hear me to suffer. Great God! how little are the terrors of thy law known to the world! In all ages, the just have shuddered with dread, in reflecting on the severity and extent of thy judgments upon the destinies of men. Alas! what do they prepare for the children of Adam?

We are conscious that the force of even this powerful passage cannot be appreciated by the reader who has not read the whole discourse. The man who has read it without anxiety for his own final safety, has reason indeed to suspect his danger. And we are persuaded that but few who read the volume through, will not concur with Blair, who pronounces Massillon "the most elegant writer of sermons which modern times have produced."

The celebrated Dr. Lambart has left a brief biographical sketch of Massillon, full of clear discrimination. We abridge a few passages from it: His first sermons produced the effect that his superiors had foreseen. Scarcely did he begin to show himself in the pulpit of Paris, than he eclipsed almost all those who at that period shone in the same place. He had declared "that he would not preach like them," not through a presumptuous confidence in his superiority, but through an equally just and mature idea, that if the minister fail, with such a theme, he must be destitute of Christian eloquence. He was persuaded that if the preacher of God's word, on the one hand, degrades himself by uttering common truths in trivial language; on the other, he misses his purpose by trying to captivate his audience with a long chain of reasoning which they are incapable of following; he knew that if all hearers are not blessed with an informed mind, all have a heart, whence the preacher ought to seek his arms; that, in the pulpit, man ought to be shown to himself, not so much to disgust him by a shocking portrait, as to afflict him by the resemblance; and, in fine, that it is sometimes useful to alarm and disquiet him, it is still more so to draw from him those tears of sensibility which are much more efficacious than the tears of despair.

Such was the plan Massillon proposed to himself, and he executed it like one who had conceived it; that is, like a master. He excels in that part of oratory which must stand instead of all the rest,—that eloquence which goes right to the soul, but which agitates without confounding, appeals without crushing, penetrates without lacerating: it goes to the bottom of the heart in search of those hidden folds in which the passions are enveloped,—those secret sophisms which they so artfully employ to blind and seduce us. To combat and destroy these sophisms it merely suffices him to develop them; but he does it in a language so affectionate and tender, that he subdues less than he attracts; and, even in displaying before us the picture of our vices, he knows how to attach and please us. His diction, always easy, elegant and pure, never deviates from that noble simplicity, without which there is no good taste, nor genuine eloquence. This simplicity, being joined in Massillon to the softest and most seducing harmony, borrows from it still new graces; and, what completes the charm of this enchanting style is, that so many beauties are felt to flow freely from the spring, without expense to their author.

Massillon derived another advantage from that eloquence of the soul which he so well understood: as in speaking to the heart of man, he spoke the language of all conditions. All went to hear his sermons; even unbelievers attended upon him, and often met with instruction there they only sought amusement. The reason was, that Massillon knew how to descend on their account to the only language they would hear, that of a philosophy, purely human in appearance, but which, finding every access to their hearts open, prepared the way for the Christian orator to approach them without effort and unresisted, and to obtain a conquest even without a combat.

His action was perfectly suited to his species of eloquence. On entering the pulpit, he appeared thoroughly penetrated with the great truths he was about to utter; with eyes declined, a modest and collected air, without violent motions, and almost without gestures, but animating the whole with a voice of sensibility, he diffused over his audience the religious emotion which his own exterior proclaimed, and caused himself to be listened to with that profound silence by which eloquence is better praised than by the loudest applause. The reputation of his manner alone induced the celebrated Baron to attend on one of his discourses: on leaving the church, he said to a friend who accompanied him, "This man is an orator, and we are only players."

The court soon wished to hear him, or rather to judge him. Without pride, as without fear, he appeared on this great and formidable theatre. He opened with distinguished lustre; and the exordium of his first discourse is one of the master strokes of modern eloquence. Louis XIV. was then at the summit of power and glory, admired by all Europe, adored by his subjects, intoxicated with adulation, and satiated with pomp. Massillon took for his text a passage of Scripture apparently least applicable to such a prince,—"Blessed are they that mourn;" and from this, he had the art to draw a eulogy the more noble and flattering, as it seemed dictated by the Gospel itself, and such as an apostle might have made: "Sire," said he, "if the world were here speaking to your majesty, it would not address you with 'Blessed are they that mourn'; 'Blessed' would say, 'the prince who never fought but to conquer; who has filled the universe with his name; who, in the course of a long and flourishing reign, has enjoyed with splendor all that men admire, the greatness of his conquests, the love of his people, the esteem of his enemies, the wisdom of his laws';—but, Sire, the Gospel speaks not as the world speaks." The audience of Versailles, accustomed as they were to the Bossuets and Bourdaloues, were unacquainted with an eloquence at the same time so delicate and so noble; in consequence, it excited in the assembly, notwithstanding the gravity of the place, an involuntary expression of admiration. Massillon's brilliant success led to his appointment to the see of Clermont. He departed for his diocese, and only returned on indispensable, consequently rare, occasions. He gave all his cares to the happy flock intrusted to him by Providence. He did not conceive that his episcopal function, which he had acquired in consequence of his success in the pulpit, gave him a dispensation from again ascending it, and that he ought to cease being useful because he had been rewarded. He consecrated to the instruction of the poor, those talents which had so often been applauded by the great; and preferred, to the noisy praises of courtiers, the simple and serious attention of a less brilliant but more docile audience. Perhaps the most eloquent of his discourses are his Conferences with

\* We are not fully satisfied with the translator's version of this celebrated passage, and have dared to attempt a better one.

his clergy. He preaches to them the virtues of which he gave the example;—disinterestedness, simplicity, forgetfulness of self, the active and prudent ardor of enlightened zeal, widely different from that fanaticism which is only a blind and often a very suspicious zeal: moderation was, indeed, his ruling character. He loved to assemble at his country seat Oratorians and Jesuits, whom he accustomed to endure, and almost to love each other.

When he appeared in the streets of Clermont, the people prostrated themselves before him, crying, "Long live our father!" Hence it was a frequent observation of this virtuous prelate, that his episcopal brethren did not sufficiently feel the degree of consideration and authority they might derive from their station; not, indeed, by pomp, or by a punctilious devotion, still less by the grimaces and intrigues of hypocrisy, but by those virtues which are recognized by the hearts of the people, and which, in a minister of true religion, represents to all eyes that just and beneficent Being of which he is the image.

The more sincerely he respected religion, the more he despised the superstitions which degrade it, and the more zealous he was to destroy them. He abolished, though not without difficulty, some very ancient and very indecent processions which the barbarism of the dark ages had established in his diocese, and which travestied the divine worship into a scandalous masquerade. The inhabitants of Clermont were used to run to these exhibitions in crowds, some through a stupid devotion, others to turn this religious farce into ridicule. The clergy of the city, through fear of the people, who were attached to these shows in proportion to their absurdity, dared not publish the mandate for their suppression. Massillon ascended the pulpit, published his own mandate, and caused himself to be heard by a tumultuous audience, who would have insulted any other preacher;—such was the fruit of his virtue and beneficence!

He died, as Fenelon died, and as every bishop ought to die, without money and without debts. It was on the 28th of September, 1743, that the church, eloquence, and humanity, sustained this irreparable loss.

The present translation is anonymous. It is a reprint of the first American one, we think, from an English edition; it has the merit of being very literal,—the French idiom may often be detected. The translator fails occasionally in the vehemence which gives such peculiar force to the original, but is generally excellent.

The theology of these sermons has a few, and but a few, traces of the papal sentiments of their great author. The authority of the church—the merit of penitence, &c. &c., are, occasionally alluded to: the doctrine of salvation by faith alone, is nowhere clearly discovered in them. Yet the topics discussed lead the author into paths where all can safely accompany him. The introductory article, by Prof. Willett, is a specimen of clear discrimination and luminous style. He justly describes these discourses as what Americans would call "revival sermons."

In conclusion, we wish we could put this noble volume into the hands of every Methodist preacher. He would receive inspiration and strength from it which could scarcely fail to affect his own ministry. Price, \$2, with the usual discount. Waite, Peirce & Co., 1 Cornhill, Boston.

## WESLEYAN CONFERENCE.

A correspondent of the Richmond Christian Advocate says of the late conference at Leeds:

"There were nearly five hundred ministers at the conference. Printed 'plans' of the services, which were to be held four weeks, were on sale in the bookellers' shops, and also lists of the names and residences of the ministers. The walls are plastered with announcements of the shops in which these 'plans' and 'lists' may be obtained, and altogether, the conference makes no small stir. The first Sunday after the opening of conference is called 'Conference Sunday,' and on that day the influx of strangers is great, and collections are made in all the chapels to defray the expenses of conference. There is seldom any preaching during the week days, except at six or seven in the morning, and six or seven in the evening, and I was much surprised to hear that on some nights there was no preaching at all, notwithstanding the presence of this great crowd of ministers. On Saturday evening, before the 'Conference Sunday,' Band Meetings were held in all the chapels. I attended the one in Oxford Place, and found the body of the chapel well filled. It was a very good meeting. The experience of Rev. Richard Reece, who has been converted 63 years, has travelled in the regular work 25 years, and is ready to take another circuit, produced a thrilling effect upon the meeting. Many of the old preachers took part in the exercises, and the meeting was protracted over the usual time. I have mentioned this meeting, because it was new to me, not having witnessed anything of the kind at our conferences in America. The band meeting, however, only differed from a low-feast in not having the ceremony of eating a little bread and taking a sup of water. Would not a meeting of this kind add to the spirituality of our conferences?"

## KENTUCKY CONFERENCE.

This body met on the 10th ult., at Frankfort. We learn from the Western Christian Advocate, that "Dr. Bacon introduced a long preamble and some resolutions, intended to fix the position of the Conference South. After some explanations from the mover, the first two resolutions were adopted, with but one solitary negative. Pending the third resolution, which title the Conference to the southern car, the hour for adjournment arrived. In the afternoon, the vote was taken by ayes and noes, and stood twenty-five for, and six against, viz., James Ward, Alfred Kelly, Munford Pelly, Allen Sears, Robert G. Gardner, and J. G. Bruce. Immediately after the vote was made every member defined his position, but at instance of Dr. Bacon, it was laid over in order to give members time for reflection. That day of grace ended on the 12th. Rev. T. N. Ralston and J. Stamper introduced a resolution, requiring the call of the roll, and that every man should answer south or north. Upon the calling of the names, J. Ward, J. G. Bruce, Allen Sears, Munford Pelly, and William Batt, answered yes; and of course their connection with the Conference ceased."

## BRITISH CONFERENCE AND THE SOUTH.

The refusal of the British to receive a Southern Methodist preacher, noticed lately in the Herald, is even stronger than we supposed. Our notice conveyed the idea that he was refused membership; but it was a refusal of recognition as a Methodist preacher, and of the usual courtesy of a seat in the Conference as such. The Watchman of London thus reports it: "At the evening sitting, application was made on behalf of a minister from America, for permission to attend the sittings of the Conference. A conversation ensued, which elicited various opinions on the subject; and also with reference to the temporary residence of ministers from that country in this, and their stated exercise of ministerial functions in Wesleyan chapels. A decision on the application was postponed; but it was subsequently resolved to decline it, on the ground that the minister making it is a member of one of the American conferences, which have recently separated from the Methodist Episcopal Church in America, because of the opposition of that church to a system of slavery existing in the Southern States."

## CORRESPONDENCE.

### LETTER FROM NEW YORK.

Re-opening of Green St. Church—Dr. Durbin's Sermon—Outline of it—His Style—American Board—Gough.

Br. Stevens.—The Green St. M. E. Church, under the pastoral charge of Dr. Bangs, which has been closed for some weeks past, undergoing repairs and alterations, was re-opened for worship on Sunday last. You will recollect that the last session of the General Conference was held in this church. The pews have been altered and modernized. A new pulpit and appropriate hangings, the introduction of gas-lights, painting, and other improvements, have added greatly, not only to the appearance of the church, but also to the comfort of the audience. The services were conducted in the morning by Dr. Durbin, of Philadelphia, who delivered an excellent discourse from Acts xiv. 21. I shall not inflict on your readers a literal report of this discourse, and even were that possible, however valuable it might be, few would care to read a printed sermon. Yet as there always is in the public mind more or less of interest attached to the remarks of such as hold a conspicuous place in the church, it may not be amiss to present a brief outline, such as memory affords.

After laying down the principle that society is a divine institution, it was shown that while all the great nations of antiquity, with the single exception of the Chinese, had passed away, those founded on Christian principles still remained, and were in a state of further development and progress. This depended on the conservative influence of the Gospel, the beneficial effects of which are visible in comparing Christianity with other nations. The great principles of Christianity are impressed upon the laws and customs of the people, and modify their social relations. He regretted the prevailing tendency in the English church to substitute a sacramental for a spiritual worship, and quoted the language of Paul in support of his own view of this subject, where, after enumerating the persons whom he had baptized, he says, "For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel," plainly showing that the administration of rites is subordinate to the preaching of the gospel. Preaching is the great means to be employed in the conversion of the world. The observance of the ceremonies of the church is the means by which believers are subsequently bound together, built up and strengthened in the faith. Hence, we observe distinctive traits of nations and character peculiar to different bodies of Christians, depending perhaps, in a great measure, upon their different modes of worship, as Presbyterian, Baptists, Friends, Methodists, &c.

If society is to be the great means of transmitting the truth from age to age, how important that it should be founded on right principles, and have correct views of the truth! But the church is the pillar and ground of the truth, and to it we look for accomplishing this end. We are not to neglect all outward worship. Religion must adapt itself to the body as well as to the mind, and hence the necessity of ordinances adapted to our senses. There is a sympathy existing between the mind and the body, and both must have a share in our religious duties. We must be cleansed from all filthiness of the flesh, as well as of the spirit.

Dr. Durbin esteems the Quakers, Fox and his coadjutors, as the greatest men of their age. They saw with grief the want of inward spiritual piety in the church. They saw every where external observances substituted, but they went to the opposite extreme of making religion entirely spiritual, and abandoning all external observances. At this juncture Wesley and Whitefield came in, and rejecting the two extremes of a religion entirely sacramental and ceremonial, and one entirely spiritual, brought forward the true doctrine now sustained by nearly every Christian denomination, viz., that religion addresses itself both to the heart and the outward man. "Had the Friends taken this middle ground, I doubt if Methodism would ever have existed."

The remainder of the discourse was occupied in discussing the value of the institutions of the Gospel to the public and to individuals, showing how the public ministrations call the mind of the people to the church as the hope of the world, its beneficial effects upon society in various ways, in creating a healthy moral feeling, and regulating public opinion and the policy of nations. In conclusion, with a view to the collection, it was asked, "Do we wish, by prospering all the institutions of the church, to leave these blessings to our children?" Some asserted that our religion costs too much. To a person who made this assertion, Dr. D. once replied, not by contrasting the expense of worldly pleasures, but by inquiring whether he would be willing that all the institutions of Christianity should be swept from the earth.

At the conclusion of the sermon, a collection was made to defray the expense of the recent alterations of the church.

Although the day was stormy, the attendance was large, many being drawn together from other denominations, from the reputation of the speaker. Dr. Durbin's style of preaching is such as is eminently calculated to secure the attention of his audience, and consequently to do good. A voice not remarkably strong, and perhaps monotonous, is rendered distinct and forcible by the slow and clear pronunciation of every syllable; and when occasionally he rises to a higher tone in the more animated parts of his discourse, the effect is thrilling. His language is refined and elegant, strong, but not coarse. Every argument is laid down and enforced with great clearness, and with abundant illustrations, always simple and to the point, such as may be easily comprehended by his hearers. It may perhaps be uncharitable to notice a lapsus linguae in the use of the word "gone," as, "have went away disappointed;" or the pronunciation of the word "Gomorrhoe" as if such "Gomorrhoe;" but as it may have the effect to put others on their guard, it may not be improper to mention them.

Friday next is to be observed by our church throughout the city as a day of fasting, and prayer for a revival of the work of God in the churches.—There will be appropriate services at an early hour in the morning at the different churches, and preaching at the Green St. church at half past ten.

The session of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, held at Brooklyn, closed on Friday last. The number of members present [510] was greater than at any previous meeting, except the one held last year at Worcester.

No new statement of the case of Mr. Gough has yet appeared. He still lies in a critical situation, and the public must rest satisfied with the present statement, (published in your paper of this week), until he so far recovers as to be enabled to give a clearer account of his disappearance. Some of the city papers have taken occasion to denounce the temperance cause in toto, and Mr. Gough's labors in particular, on account of what they call his return to his former intemperate habits. But whether Mr. G. has fallen, or not, remains to be yet ascertained. The account given is certainly not very satisfactory, but we are bound to believe him innocent until further testimony is produced. Allowing that he was the only cause of his late misfortune, it proves nothing against the temperance cause, but should call for renewed exertions, when so striking an example of the indomitable force of former habits presents itself. Whilst we endeavor to obtain the signature of the inebriate to our pledge, let us also point him with more earnestness than formerly to Him who alone is able by His grace to

preserve from the power of the tempter. This part of our duty in the temperance movement is too often neglected, and unless we can bring our converts to rely on God for strength to combat their dissipated appetites, we can expect but little ultimate good result. Yours truly, New York, Sept. 18, 1845. LORENZO.

## OHIO CONFERENCE.

The South—Messrs. Waterman & Ebert—State of the Conference.

Dear Br. Stevens.—What do you think of our action, at the late Conference, on church matters? If you have received the resolutions which were passed, with reference to the "plan of separation," and the members South who decline leaving the M. E. Church, you see we speak out plainly—I trust not rashly.—We have some half dozen in our Conference who sympathize with the South somewhat strongly. Two, I understand, sent, the morning after the adjournment of the Conference, a communication to Bishop Hamilton, informing him of their intention to unite with the new organization. These were Brs. J. A. Waterman, and Isaac Ebert. The change in the views of the former is very remarkable. Two years ago he was considered one of the most decided abolitionists in the Conference. Now he changes associations with a church which, to say the least, is not likely to be ever emancipated in its views and feelings. I trust, however, will carry some of the old leaven with him; it will be needed. We received two preachers from the Kentucky Conference, Pres. Tomlinson, and Rev. A. J. McLaughlin. The bishop asked a preacher in Augusta, that place having given in its address to the M. E. Church.

As to numbers in society, I believe there has been little or no increase in our Conference the past year, though some thousands, I suppose, have united with the church. But a more rigid discipline than has been administered, and many of the numbers who were gathered in a few years since, have been cut off, or have withdrawn. I think there has been quite an increase of piety among the members generally, and especially in the ministry. More of the latter, I presume, have professed the experience of "perfect love" during the past year, than in any ten previous years.

Our Conference still continues to manifest a deep interest in the cause of education. We have seven first-rate seminaries; and the prospects of our university are very encouraging. More than forty thousand dollars have been raised for this last institution within the bounds of the Conference, during the past two years. Yours truly, F. MILLER.

Chillicothe, O., Sept. 18, 1845.

## THE CAMP-MEETING FOR DANVILLE DISTRICT.

This camp-meeting was held at Craftsbury last week. The late rains, and the press of agricultural business in this farming community, prevented large numbers from attending, who would, in other circumstances, have rejoiced to participate in the profitable and delightful exercises of the occasion; however, a large number of preachers, and a respectable congregation, assembled.

Owing to a powerful shower on Monday afternoon, there was no public service until Tuesday afternoon, when the writer endeavored to advance and enforce some measures, which are indispensable for a revival of God's work, founded on, "Sanctify yourselves for the morning the Lord will do wonders among you." In the evening, Br. H. J. Woolley inspired, "In what respects we are to receive the Holy Ghost, and what are the works by which we may know that we are Christians?" drawn from, "Have you received the Holy Ghost?"

Wednesday evening Br. J. Hayes discoursed on the path of life, its fullness of joy, and celestial pleasures—"Thou wilt show me the path of life." In the afternoon we had the sacrament administered, when Br. S. Chamberlain addressed us from, "Teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." The safety, virtue, and worth of the Gospel, in individual, domestic, and national happiness, and the necessity of a thorough reformation in the church in reference to the moral and practical principles of our holy religion. Br. J. W. Pease followed in the evening, on the importance of heeding the voice, and walking in the ways of God—"Obey my voice, and I will be your God," &c.

Thursday morning we were exhorted, by Br. W. Chase, to be laborers together with God—"For we are laborers together with God." In the afternoon we sang, and were exhorted to be true to our duty, and to be diligent in our work, by Br. A. Webster, who described the flock and kingdom of Christ, and offered the exhortation, "Fear not, little flock; thy Father's good pleasure is to give you the kingdom." Br. P. N. Granger besought us to consecrate ourselves to God—"I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God," &c. In the evening, Br. Hart, of the Tidewater Conference, preached on, "Whosoever doubteth of this water, shall thirst again," &c., and Br. O. Dunbar, who we have already mentioned, let us with the same rule, let us mind the same thing."

Friday morning Br. B. Isbitt, of the Tidewater Conference, preached a powerful sermon on "For what is man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul, or what shall he give in exchange for his soul?" 1. What is it to gain the whole world? 2. What is it to lose our life? 3. What is it to lose our life? In the afternoon Br. M. C. Chow followed with a moving and impressive discourse—"The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved."

The public services were conducted with simplicity and power, laboring not to show the man, but to present "Jesus Christ, and him crucified." At the request of our P. Elder, who labored with his characteristic promptness and ability, we commenced the public worship of the day with a love-feast, which was seasons of power and sanctity, and held meetings in all the tents before the evening prayer-meeting, after the services at the stand.

As the immediate fruit of the labors of the church at this meeting, it is thought about twenty were converted, a considerable number of backsliders were reclaimed, and many sanctified. We trust, also, as the more remote influence, hundreds will be redeemed from their sins during the present year.

On Saturday morning, about 8 o'clock, we parted from our concentrated abode, sanctified by a thousand endearing associations, in the usual manner, more to meet again on earth; but resolved to labor, with greater earnestness, for a personal meeting for heaven, and to give greater







